

Given Shelter

New animal shelter
construction underway

By KEITH L. MARTIN

While the cleared tract of land behind Town Hall and First Parish Church may not seem impressive to the casual passerby, it is a sign of hope for many animal lovers in town.

It is here that work has begun on the town's new animal shelter, a building years in the making thanks to town officials, citizens and the work of the Friends of the Animal Shelter.

On Saturday, all of these parties were represented for a ceremonial groundbreaking that included both pet owners and their dogs, who inspected the future home of the 30'x44' foot building that will house stray and lost animals until they can be rescued.

"This is a very happy day for the Friends of the Animal Shelter," said the committee's Annie Eldridge. "A lot of people have been involved

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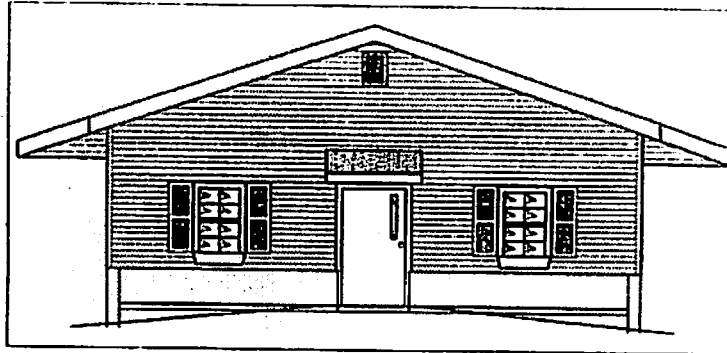
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with this and the committee worked hard for two years and kept going when things looked grim."

In 2003, Annual Town Meeting voters appropriated \$75,000 for the shelter and the Friends have raised over \$115,000 through fundraisers and private donations to the cause.

In August, a bid for vendors to construct a new, pre-fabricated shelter received only one taker, so the town revamped their efforts to get the structure constructed. Two weeks ago, Town Manager Rocco Longo said that the town accepted a bid for \$24,760 for concrete footings for the building. Department of Public Works Director Tom Daley added that the strategy now is to bid out parts of the building with the town also pitching in assistance to make the shelter a reality.



The new 30'x44' shelter will feature separate locations for dogs and cats who are either strays or wandered away from home.

"We've got contracts in place for the concrete, plumbing and electric and the design plans are 90 to 95 percent complete," said Daley. "We'll get the building shelled and then we'll get some help from the DPW and volunteers to get the building completed."

Plans for the new structure show separate areas for dogs and cats to be held as well as office space and a quarantine and utility room. It will replace the current 12'x12' concrete structure on the same

property, which has struggled with lack of space, temperature problems and other issues over the last several years.

Longo called the endeavor to get a new shelter a "very typical Duxbury project" where the whole town got involved and was led by a strong committee of citizens.

"Annie Eldridge was an outstanding citizen in this effort and really had an army behind her in her committee,

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Setting the Stage

Aerosmith guitarist Joe Perry has played at numerous benefits during his career.

On Friday, his instrument of choice was a shovel rather than a guitar as he and wife Billie made a site visit to the future home of the new Duxbury Animal Shelter.

In 1998, the Perrys made a donation of \$25,000 that got the ball rolling for the town and volunteers to seek a new home for lost animals and replace the current ramshackle structure used by the town.

Billie said that as a family of animal lovers, they wanted to contribute to a nice and clean place that would take care of animals whether they were looking for a home or had just wandered away from their owners.

"One of the reasons we moved to Duxbury was that we felt it had a very friendly, country-like atmosphere and animals, to us, are a big part of that," she said. "Whether it's a goldfish, cats, dogs, horses, or miniature goats, it is all part of the experience of being able to live with nature...and to be able to have your family and your children exposed to living with nature."

While adults in town may have grown up with animals in their lives, Billie added that she hopes the children of Duxbury and other area towns also get similar exposure.

"I think as land becomes more and more of a premium, we're running the risk of our children not being able to grow up and know what it's like to ride a horse or look at a cow or sheep and I think that



Billie and Joe Perry helped excavate the site of the town's new animal shelter on Friday. The pair made the first donation to get the project off the ground in 1998.

is something we are losing."

Husband Joe added that just looking at the current animal shelter was one factor as to why his family donated both funds and time to the effort to get a new place for animals. As longtime residents of the town, he said one of the best things about Duxbury is the constant presence of animals.

"That's why we love Duxbury," he said. "You can drive around and feel like you're part of nature. Even if you don't own a horse or a dog, it's fun to see them and have them as part of your environment and by contributing to the shelter in that small way, we like to think we've helped and encourage others to do the same."

Annie Eldridge of the Friends of the Animal Shelter

said the Perrys have been very generous over the years to offer their assistance beyond their monetary donation.

"They've made such an emotional commitment to the project and I think it's just incredibly wonderful for them to give us their time in their busy schedules," she said.

Further proof of the Perrys' love of animals can be seen in the new book, *People We Know, Horses They Love* by NBC Today Show reporter Jill Rappaport. In the book, the Perrys pose at their Duxbury home with two of their Friesians. The publication's proceeds help the Pegasus Therapeutic Riding program, which brings the joy of riding to individuals with disabilities.

—KEITH L. MARTIN

Town Officials, Animal Lovers Dig New Shelter

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so without them, this would not have been done," he said. "We struggled with the procurement but with Tom Daley addressing these issues, I'm confident we'll have a great facility in town that we haven't had in the past."

Eldridge said that her committee's hopes are for a "safe and happy place" for lost and homeless animals until they can find a home. Committee members are also hopeful that both the construction and the opening of the new building will incorporate the continued efforts of Duxbury citizens.

"We'd like to see more members of the community involved from painting to landscaping and even being here at the shelter with the animals when no one else can," said Billie Emerson of the Friends. "Everyone has been so supportive of this effort and I hope it continues."

With the first holes being dug this week to pour a foundation, the committee's focus now is on the building itself, with residents Susan Curtis and John Baldwin working to get residents and local companies to dedicate time and materials for the new structure.



BIG DIG: Members of the Friends of the Animal Shelter, town officials and animal lovers gathered Saturday for the official groundbreaking for the town's new shelter.

"We'd like to get as many contractors to donate their time and come in under budget," she said. "I've already got commitments from Cape Cod and Goodrich Lumber, so I'm

two-for-two in asking, which is great."

Nancy Day organized the "Cause for Paws" fundraiser last year and said that it is great to look into the future of the shelter now that its

construction is underway.

"We're very happy to see this getting started and we hope by the summer that we'll have a nice, clean place for dogs and other animals," she said. "In the [current

shelter] there are issues both in the summertime with heat and in the winter with cold, so we are happy that everyone contributed to see this new shelter become a reality for the animals."